

U.S. EMBASSY – MANILA

American Citizen Services

March 2005

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

Dr. Condoleezza Rice became the 66th Secretary of State on January 26, 2005. As she stated at her confirmation hearing, "we must use American diplomacy to help create a balance of power in the world that favors freedom. And the time for diplomacy is now."

Prior to becoming Secretary of State, Dr. Rice served as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, commonly referred to as the National Security Advisor.

She also was in government service from 1989 through March 1991, the period of German reunification and the final days of the Soviet Union, when she served in the Bush Administration as Director, and then Senior Director, of Soviet and East European Affairs in the National Security Council, and a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Looking back on that historic period, Secretary Rice recognizes the importance of unity of purpose and values and the strong support from the Congress in the advance of freedom. "Our task and our duty is to unite around a vision and policies that will spread freedom and prosperity around the globe."

American Citizen Services

Registration with Embassies

Registration at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate (in the country you are visiting) makes your presence and whereabouts known, in case it is necessary for a consular officer to contact you in an emergency. During a disaster overseas, American consular officers can assist in evacuation were that to become necessary. But they cannot assist you if they do not know where you are.

Registration is particularly important for those who plan to stay in a country longer than one month, or who will travel to:

*A country that is experiencing civil unrest, has an unstable political climate, or is undergoing a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or a hurricane.

*A country where there are no U.S. officials. In such cases, you should register at the U.S. embassy or consulate in an adjacent country, leave an itinerary with the Consular Section, ask about conditions in the country that you will visit and ask about the third country that may represent U.S. interests there.

If you are traveling with an escorted tour to areas experiencing political uncertainty or other problems, find out if your tour operator registered your trip through the State Department. If not, or if you are traveling on your own, you can register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare or whereabouts may not be released to inquirers without your expressed written authorization. Registration through the website is not considered proof of citizenship. It is also a good idea to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers from or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States.

American Citizen Services

U.S. Embassy

1201 Roxas Blvd.

Ermita, Manila, Philippines

Office: 63-2-528-6300
x2246/2555

Fax: 632-522-3242

Passports and Birth Registration

Mon thru Fri 8:00am - 11:00am
2-879-4747

Notary Services

Mon, Wed & Fri 8:00 - 11:00am

Legal Capacity to Marry

Mon thru Fri 8:00am - 9:00am

EMERGENCIES: For emergencies after hours please call 63-2-528-6300 and ask for the Duty Officer.

Website:

<http://www.phillippines.usembassy.gov>

Email:

acsinfomanila@state.gov

Outreach / IRS Schedule

March 28	Cebu - No outreach <u>IRS Rep. ONLY</u>
March 31	Olongapo / IRS Rep.
April 1	Angeles / IRS Rep.
April 15	Davao

NEW CONSULAR SERVICES FEES TAKE EFFECT MARCH 8, 2005

Effective March 8, the U.S. Embassy in Manila will implement a new schedule of fees for consular services to recover the costs in enhancing the security features of the documents, detecting and deterring visa fraud and to support enhanced border security. The revised fees are applicable to all U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.

The fee adjustments include new surcharges for immigrant visas and passports, and the new fraud prevention and detection fee for H-1B and L visas that were legislated in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (PL108-447).

The cost of getting an immigrant visa will increase by \$45 while a \$12 surcharge will be added to the existing cost of a U.S. passport, which is being redesigned to include a biometric identifier as a new security feature. The new fee for a U.S. passport will also cover the cost of sending passports by Priority Mail, a security feature that allows better tracking and accounting of passports delivered to our customers in the U.S.

The new \$500 Fraud Prevention and Detection Fee for H-1B and L visas will be collected domestically from employers in the United States filing a petition to initially grant an alien H-1B or L status or to obtain authorization for an alien having such status to change employers. Overseas, a similar \$500 fee will be imposed on the applicants for L visas covered under blanket petition provision of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) as their employers would not have already been charged this fee domestically. The spouse and children of an applicant for H or L status will not be charged the new fee.

Other consular services with increased fees include the Diversity (DV) Lottery (from \$100 to \$375), Affidavit of Support Review (from \$65 to \$70), File Search and Verification of U.S. Citizenship (from \$45 to \$60), and Determining Returning Resident Status Processing (from \$360 to \$400).

Meanwhile, the fees for the J-visa waiver and issuance of a transportation Letter for A Legal Permanent Resident to the U.S. have been decreased from \$230 to \$215, and from \$300 to \$165, respectively, as determined by the recent cost-of-service study conducted by the U.S. Department of State.

Please note that the \$100 application fee for nonimmigrant visas remains unchanged at this time.

The last adjustments to consular services fees worldwide were made in 2002.

Tax season is right around the corner!

**An IRS representative
will be in Manila from March 21 until April 1, 2005.**

To make an appointment, with the representative, please call the American Citizen Services Unit
(02) 528-6300 extension 2246 / 2567

PROTECT ACT

Every year, thousands of people visit the Philippines to enjoy the beautiful beaches and the local culture. Unfortunately, not everyone comes simply to enjoy the scenery. The rate of child sex tourism is increasing at an alarming speed. Last year, Congress took new action against the evils of child sex tourism. Under the Protect Act of April 2003, it is a crime, prosecutable in the United States, for a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien, to travel to a foreign country with the **intent** to engage in criminal sexual activity or to engage in illicit sexual conduct in a foreign country. It is important to note that under the new legislation, the act of illicit sexual conduct is sufficient to violate the law. Intent to travel for that reason does not need to be proven.

For purposes of the Protect Act, illicit sexual conduct means: (1) a sexual act with a person under 18 years of age that would be illegal in the United States or (2) any commercial sex act in a foreign country with a person under the age of 18.

The U.S. Government is working very hard to eliminate child sex tourism all over the world. In a little over a year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has already charged four child sex tourists that committed crimes here in the Philippines and is actively investigating several more. If you have any information, please contact the Immigration and Customs Attaché or American Citizen Services at 528-6300.

Trafficking and Sex Tourism FAQs

Q. If I travel abroad and have sex with a minor, is that a crime? What if I don't know that the girl is a minor?

A. Yes, it is a crime for a United States citizen or permanent resident to travel abroad for the purpose of having sex with a minor and it is a crime for a United States citizen or permanent resident to actually have sex with a minor while abroad. If the sexual activity with a minor is a commercial sex act, then the defendant may establish the defense that the defendant reasonably believed that the person with whom the defendant engaged in the commercial sex act had attained the age of 18 years.

Q. What if an American citizen or national travels overseas on an ordinary trip, not intending to engage in sex with minors, but at some point during the trip engages in sex with a minor?

A. In this case, the American citizen or national may be subject to prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 2423(c). Even if the person did not have the intent to engage in sex with a minor at the time he or she left the United States, such intent at the time of travel is not necessary. For example, an American citizen or national who travels to a foreign country without any such intent, but who engages in a commercial sex act with a person under 18 at some point during his stay in that foreign country, may be subject to prosecution.

HARD FACTS ON DRUGS OVERSEAS

Each year, 2,500 Americans are arrested overseas. One third of the arrests are on drug-related charges. Many of those arrested assumed as U.S. citizens that they could not be arrested. From Asia to Africa, Europe to South America, U.S. citizens are finding out the hard way that drug possession or trafficking equals jail in foreign countries.

There is very little that anyone can do to help you if you are caught with drugs.

It is your responsibility to know what the drug laws are in a foreign country before you go, because "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women arrested abroad. The rise is a result of women who serve as drug couriers or "mules" in the belief they can make quick money and have a vacation without getting caught. Instead of a short vacation, they get a lengthy stay or life sentence in a foreign jail.

A number of the Americans arrested abroad on drug charges in 1994 possessed marijuana. Many of these possessed one ounce or less of the substance. The risk of being put in jail for just one marijuana cigarette is not worth it.

If you are purchasing prescription medications in quantities larger than that considered necessary for personal use, you could be arrested on suspicion of drug trafficking.

Once you're arrested, the American consular officer **CANNOT** get you out!

You may say "it couldn't happen to me", but the fact is that it could happen to you if you find yourself saying one of the following:

... *"I'm an American citizen and no foreign government can put me in their jail."*

... *"If I only buy or carry a small amount, it won't be a problem."*

If you are arrested on a drug charge it is important that you know what your government **CAN** and **CANNOT** do for you.

The U.S. Consular Officer **CAN**

- visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest
- give you a list of local attorneys (The U.S. Government cannot assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these individuals or recommend a particular attorney.)
- notify your family and/or friends and relay requests for money or other aid -- but only with your authorization
- intercede with local authorities to make sure that your rights *under local law* are fully observed and that you are treated humanely, according to internationally accepted standards
- protest mistreatment or abuse to the appropriate authorities

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The U.S. Consular Officer **CANNOT**

- demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country!
- represent you at trial or give legal counsel
- pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. Government funds

If you are caught buying, selling, carrying or using drugs -- from hashish to heroin, marijuana to mescaline, cocaine to quaaludes, to designer drugs like ecstasy....

IT COULD MEAN:

Interrogation and Delays Before Trial - including mistreatment and solitary confinement for up to one year under very primitive conditions

Lengthy Trials - conducted in a foreign language, with delays and postponements

Weeks, Months or Life in Prison - some places include hard labor, heavy fines, and/or lashings, if found guilty

The Death Penalty - in a growing number of countries (e.g., Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey)

Although drug laws vary from country to country, it is important to realize before you make the mistake of getting involved with drugs that foreign countries do not react lightly to drug offenders. In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity for personal use may be tried and receive the same sentence as the large-scale trafficker.

**DON'T LET YOUR TRIP ABROAD BECOME
A NIGHTMARE!**

Are You Prepared ?

The recent tsunami that devastated much of South Asia has many of us thinking about our own safety and updating our emergency plans. Although each emergency is different, there are basic rules that will apply to any situation.

1. Establish an emergency action plan (EAP) for you and your family. During an emergency, it is important to know where to go, how to get there, and what alternatives should be used in case the primary route is blocked.
2. Practice the plan. Having an EAP is futile unless everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Running through your EAP before a disaster strikes can help you remain calm and decisive when the real emergency happens.
3. Don't panic. Getting flustered can cost you precious seconds that you may need to get to safety. If you have a sound EAP, just stick to it and help others do the same.
4. Prepare a disaster supply kit. Once a disaster strikes, you will not have time to search for supplies and stores may be closed. If you assemble supplies in advance, you can persevere until relief is available.
5. Find out who your Embassy Warden is. Each province has at least one Embassy Warden that is responsible for disseminating information from the Embassy. During an emergency, he/she would be your primary point of contact with the US Embassy. Send an email to acsinfomanila@state.gov to get the name of your Warden.
6. Check out www.fema.gov for more information on disaster preparedness.

Travel and Living Abroad

Find the latest information about traveling or living abroad
by visiting the
State Department's website at:
<http://www.state.gov/travel/>

Your Child's Passport

TWO-PARENT CONSENT LAW: NOTARIZED STATEMENT OF CONSENT NOW REQUIRED FOR NON- APPEARING PARENT APPEARANCE OF BOTH PARENTS ENCOURAGED

The U.S. Department of State requires a notarized statement of consent when only one parent executes a U.S. passport application of a child under the age of 14. The statement must give the non-appearing parent's unequivocal and unconditional consent to the issuance of the passport, and must be notarized before a competent notary or a notary at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. If the person executing the application in person has documentary evidence that he/she has sole custody of the child (e.g. custody order or death certificate), then only one parent is necessary to execute the application.

The U.S. Embassy strongly prefers that both parents appear in person during the application process; however, at times that is not practical. In such cases, the Embassy may accept a notarized statement of consent from the parent who does not appear. The Embassy will decide whether a personal appearance is nevertheless required. The requirements that a non-appearing parent's statement be notarized are intended to prevent child abduction or other interference with the non-appearing parent's rights.

For more information, please check the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs' website at <http://travel.state.gov>, and the Embassy website at <http://philippines.usembassy.gov/>. The websites provide the application forms and all the necessary information needed to complete the application as well as the location of the passport offices. For specific questions, please contact the U.S. Embassy at (63) (2) 528-6300, Ext 2555 or by e-mail at ACSInfoManila@state.gov [<mailto:ACSInfoManila@state.gov>](mailto:ACSInfoManila@state.gov).

New Visa Information Service

The new telephone number of the U.S. Embassy Consular Section Visa Appointment and Information Service for PLDT and SMART subscribers is 1-909-101-7878. The number will be available for GLOBE subscribers shortly. This number is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. The public may make non-immigrant visa appointments and obtain information regarding immigrant and non-immigrant visa application procedures through this Visa Information Service. This is a toll call; the cost is approximately 53 pesos per minute. Visit <http://manila.usembassy.gov> for more information.

Overstaying on your Filipino Visa

Don't let it happen to You!

Immigration violations are taken very seriously in the Philippines. Every year, dozens of foreigners pay fines and are put in Immigration detention for breaking the law. Visa regulations in the Philippines change often - be sure to check the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) website at www.dfa.gov.ph frequently for updates.

Visitors

U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter the Philippines for stays of less than 21 days. Visitors coming to the Philippines on the no-visa policy must enter for tourism purposes, have a passport valid for six-months beyond their estimated stay and present proof of onward travel.

Temporary Residents

If the intended stay is over 21 days, a visa is required. Currently, 21-day visas can be extended to 59 days for 2,020 pesos. Visa extensions can be made at the Bureau of Immigration in Manila or at a regional office. If a visitor overstays their temporary visa, they may have to pay a fine of 1,000 pesos. Failure to pay the fine may result in detention.

Permanent Residents

There are many types of visas for permanent residents. The non-quota types are similar to U.S. family based categories. For example, spouses of Philippine citizens are eligible for a 13-a visa, which will give the holder a green card status.

The Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV) is also available, but has age and financial requirements. The SRRV is advantageous because the holder receives a permanent non-immigrant status with multiple entry privileges.

Your Visa is a very important document. Make sure it is always current!

REGISTRATION FORM

(Date of Registration: _____)

 PERMANENT
(More than four months)

 TEMPORARY
(Four months or less)

FULL NAME: (Last, First, Middle)	SEX:		
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH:	SS NUMBER:		
COLOR OF EYES:	HEIGHT:		
COLOR OF HAIR:	WEIGHT (lbs.):		
LOCAL ADDRESS IN PHILIPPINES:	PHONE NO.:		
U.S. ADDRESS:	PHONE NO.:		
OCCUPATION:			
COMPANY NAME:	PHONE NO.:		
COMPANY ADDRESS:	FAX NO.:		
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	US PPT. NO.:		
EMERGENCY CONTACT:	RELATIONSHIP:		
EMERGENCY ADDRESS:	PHONE NO.:		
DEPENDENTS' INFORMATION:			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth.</u>	<u>Passport Number</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please attach a copy of the biographic page of your passport to this form and return it to: US Embassy, 1201 Roxas Blvd., 1000 Manila, Philippines

YOUR 2 X 2 PHOTO
HERE

PLEASE SIGN HERE:

FOR ACS STAFF ONLY:

() Entered ACS System Date: _____

Public Announcement

Worldwide Caution

September 10, 2004

U.S. Department of State

This Public Announcement is being updated to remind U.S. citizens of the continuing threat of terrorist actions and anti-American violence against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. This supersedes the Worldwide Caution dated April 29, 2004 and expires on March 10, 2005.

The Department of State is deeply concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and interests abroad, as well as the potential for demonstrations and violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. U.S. citizens are reminded that demonstrations and rioting can occur at any time. In reaction to the execution of hostages in Iraq, there have been demonstrations and associated violence in the hostages' country of origin. While Americans are generally not the targets in such incidents, U.S. citizens could be caught up in the violence. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.

The Department of State remains concerned by indications that al-Qaida and affiliated groups continue to prepare to strike U.S. interests abroad. Al-Qaida and its associated organizations have struck in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Future al-Qaida attacks could possibly involve non- conventional weapons such as chemical or biological agents as well as conventional weapons of terror, to include explosive devices.

Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, assassinations, hijackings, bombings or kidnappings. These may involve aviation and other transportation and maritime interests. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. These may include facilities where U.S. citizens and other foreigners congregate or visit, including residential areas, business offices, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels and public areas. U.S. citizens are encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.

U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or suspend public services from time to time to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. Americans abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

As the Department continues to develop information on any potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its consular information program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328.

Public Announcement

THE PHILIPPINES

February 18, 2005

This Public Announcement is being issued to update information on security incidents and concerns in the Philippines. It supersedes the Public Announcement issued November 1, 2004, and expires on July 18, 2005.

The terrorist threat to Americans in the Philippines remains high, and the Embassy continues to receive reports of ongoing activities by known terrorist groups. In view of a number of security-related incidents and the possibility of future terrorist attacks, and other violence or criminal activity, Americans traveling to or residing in the Philippines are urged to exercise caution and maintain heightened security awareness. Extremist groups present in Southeast Asia, such as Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI), have demonstrated transnational capabilities to carry out attacks against locations where Westerners congregate. JI is an extremist group linked to Al-Qaeda and other regional terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and has cells operating throughout Southeast Asia. Terrorist groups do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. U.S. citizens are urged to defer non-essential travel to central, southern, and western Mindanao, and the islands of Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, and Jolo, located in the Sulu archipelago in the southwest of the Philippines, due to military operations against kidnappings and other criminal activity. As a precaution, the U.S. Government carefully reviews all travel by official personnel to Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, and emergency services to U.S. citizens in some of these areas may be limited.

Bombings have claimed many lives and injured hundreds in the Philippines over the past few years. The Department of State continues to receive information that there may be future bombings in the Philippines, including against airports, commercial shipping, passenger vessels and seaports. On February 14, 2005, explosions detonated in the southern Philippines cities of Davao and General Santos, followed shortly thereafter by one explosion in the business/commercial district of Makati, Metro Manila, resulting in at least 7 deaths and over 150 injuries. Two terrorist groups known to be operating in the Philippines have claimed responsibility for the bombings: the "Abu Sayyaf Group" ("ASG") and the Jema'ah Islamiyah ("JI"). A bombing at a sports arena in Maguindanao Province on January 4, 2004, killed at least 15 persons and injured dozens more. A bombing at the international airport in Davao on March 4, 2003, killed at least 21 people, including one American, and injured over 150 others. In June 2004, two grenades exploded in Metro Manila, reportedly injuring four people near a university campus. In October 2002, one U.S. service member was killed and another injured when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated in Zamboanga City in Mindanao. The February 27, 2004, terrorist bombing and subsequent sinking of Superferry 14 in Manila Bay killed more than 100 people. The Philippine Government has filed related criminal charges against individuals believed associated with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which had previously claimed responsibility for this attack. Other explosive devices have been discovered throughout the Philippines and defused prior to detonation. The U.S. Embassy urges Americans to exercise special caution in public places or when using public transportation.

The Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continue to engage in discussions that could lead to a peace agreement, and a military ceasefire remains in effect. However, military operations continue in various parts of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago against elements associated with the ASG, the Jema'ah Islamiyah, the Misuari Breakaway Group (a renegade faction of the Moro National Liberation Front), and the terrorist New People's Army (NPA), the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Americans residing in or visiting these areas should constantly review their security posture, take appropriate action to secure their well being, and remain in close contact with local police and the Embassy for current information.

The NPA operates throughout the Philippines and has issued public threats against U.S. citizens and interests in the Philippines. In January 2002, an American tourist was shot and killed by an unidentified gunman on the slopes of Mt. Pinatubo in Pampanga Province, an area known for NPA activity. Americans are advised to exercise special caution when traveling throughout the Philippines due to the possibility of armed robberies, kidnappings, and armed clashes between the NPA and government troops in some areas. The ASG continues to issue public threats against U.S. citizens and interests in the Philippines. The ASG has taken hostage large numbers of Filipinos, Americans and foreign tourists since April 2000. Several were freed after substantial ransoms were paid, some escaped or were rescued by military action, and some were killed. In 2002, one American hostage was killed and another injured during a rescue operation after spending more than a year in captivity. Because the ASG has demonstrated its ability to travel long distances by boat to kidnap foreigners, it is possible that other locations in the Philippines, such as beach resorts, could be attacked. Americans should particularly avoid isolated beach resorts or areas where the ASG remains active.

Criminal and political extortionists kidnapped several Filipinos and foreigners, in Metro Manila including three American children in 2003 and an American businessman in 2004. Kidnappers operating in Metro Manila and throughout the Philippines have snatched family members of prominent local business leaders and politicians for financial gain, to make a political statement, or as part of business, land, or personal disputes.

Americans living in or visiting the Philippines are strongly encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Manila through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. The U.S. Embassy is located at: 1201 Roxas Boulevard, Manila, Philippines, tel. 632 528-6300. The Consular American Citizen Services (ACS) section's fax number is 632 522-3242 and the ACS web page is at <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/rp1/www/main.html>.

U.S. citizens should also consult the Department of State's [Consular Information Sheet](#) for the Philippines and the [Worldwide Caution Public Announcement](#), located at <http://travel.state.gov/> to obtain updated information on travel and security within the Philippines. For further information, US citizens may contact the Department of State toll-free at 1-888-407-4747, or, if calling from overseas, 317-472-2328.